

POETRY.

BE KIND.

Be kind to thy father—for when thou wert young,
Who loved thee so fondly as he?
He caught the first accents that fell from thy tongue,
And joined in thine innocent glee.
Be kind to thy father, for now he is old,
His locks intermingled with grey,
His footsteps are feeble, once fearless and bold;
Thy father is passing away.

Be kind to thy mother—for lo! on her brow
May traces of sorrow be seen,
O well may'st thou cherish and comfort her now,
For loving and kind hath she been.
Remember thy Mother—for there will she pray,
As long as God giveth her breath,
With accents of kindness, then, cheer her lone way,
E'en to the dark valley of death.

Be kind to thy brother—his heart will have dearth,
If the smile of thy love be withdrawn;
The flowers of feeling will fade at thy birth,
If the dew of affection be gone;
Be kind to thy brother—wherever you are,
The love of a brother shall be
An ornament purer and richer by far,
Than pearls from the depths of the sea.

Be kind to thy sister—not many may know
The depth of true sisterly love;
The wealth of the Ocean lies fathoms below
The surface that sparkles above.
Thy kindness shall bring to thee many sweet hours,
And blessings thy pathway to crown,
Affection shall weave thee a garland of flowers,
More precious than wealth or renown.

From Graham's Magazine.

THE REEFER OF '76.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHURCHING IN THE LAST WAR."

THE SHIP'S BOY.

"Hillo!" said Westbrook, "who's skulking here?" and he pushed his foot against a dark heap, huddled up under the shade of one of the guns. As he did so, a slight pale-faced, sickly-looking boy started up. "Ah! it's you, Dick, is it?—why I never thought you'd skulk—there, go—but you mustn't do it again, my lad."

The boy was a favorite with all on board. He had embarked at Newport, and was, therefore, a new hand, but his quiet demeanor, as well as a certain melancholy expression of face he always wore, had won him a way to our hearts. Little was known of his history, except that he was an orphan. Punctual in the discharge of his duties, yet holding himself aloof from the rest of the boys, he seemed to be one, who although he had determined to endure his present fate, was yet conscious of having seen better days. I was more confirmed in my belief that he had been born to a higher station from the choice of his words in conversation, especially with his superiors. His manner, too, was not that of one brought up to buffet roughly against fortune. That one so young should be thrust, unaided out into the world, was a sure passport for him to my heart, for his want of parents was a link of sympathy uniting us together; we had been, therefore, always as much friends as the relative difference of our situations, on board a man-of-war would allow. Yet even I, so great was his reserve, knew little more of his history than the rest of the shipmates. Once, indeed, when I had rendered him some little kindness, such as an officer always has it in his power without much trouble to himself, to bestow upon an inferior, his heart had opened, and he had told me, more by hints than in direct words, that he had lost his father and mother and a little sister, within a few weeks of each other, and that, houseless, penniless, and friendless, he had been forced to sea by his only remaining relatives, in order that he might shift for himself. I suspected what he did not pass under his real name. But whatever had been his former lot, or however great were his sufferings, he never repined. He went through his duty silently, but sadly, as if—poor child—he carried within him a breaking heart.

"Please, sir," said he, in reply to Westbrook's address, "it is but a minute any how I've been here."

"Well, well, Dick, I believe you," said the warm-hearted midshipman. "But there go eight bells, and as your watch is up, you may go below. What! crying—fie, fie, my lad, how girl-hearted you have grown."

"I am not girl-hearted always," sobbed the little fellow, looking up into his superior's face, "but I could n't help crying when I thought that a year ago to-night my mother died, and I crept under the gun so that no one might see and laugh at me, as they do at every one here. It was just at this hour she died," he continued, chokingly, bursting into a fit of uncontrollable weeping, "and she was the only friend I had on earth."

"Poor boy! God bless you!" said Westbrook, mentally, as the lad, finishing his passionate exclamation, turned hastily away.

It was my watch, and as Westbrook met me coming on deck, he paused a moment, and said,

"Do you know any thing about that poor little fellow, I mean Dick Rasey? God help me I've been rating him for skulking, when the lad only wanted to hide his grief for his mother from the jests of the crew. I would n't have done it for any thing."

"No—he has always maintained the greatest reserve respecting himself. Has he gone below?"

"Yes! who can he be? It's strange

I feel such an interest in him."

"Poor child!—he has seen better days, and this hard life is killing him. I wish he could distinguish himself some how—the skipper might then take a fancy to him and put him on the quarter-deck."

"What a dear little middy he would make," said Westbrook, his gay humor flashing out through his sadness, "why we haven't got a cocked-hat aboard that would n't bury him up like an extinguisher, or a dirk to spare which is n't longer than his whole body."

"Shame, Jack—its not a matter for jest—the lad is dying by inches."

"Ah! y' are right, Parker; I wish to heaven the boy had a birth aft here. But now I must go below, for I'm confoundedly sleepy. You'll have a lighter watch of it than I had. The moon will be up directly—and there, by Jove! she comes—look how gloriously her disc slides up behind that wave. But this is no time for poetry, for I'm as drowsy as if I was about to sleep, like the old fellow in the Arabian story, for a matter of a hundred years or more, or even like the seven sleepers of Christendom, who fell into a doze some centuries back, and will come to life again the Lord knows when," and with a long yawn, my mercurial messmate gave a parting glance at the rising luminary, and went below.

The spectacle to which Westbrook had called my attention was indeed a glorious one. The night had been somewhat misty, so that the stars were obscured, or but faintly visible; here and there, while the light breeze that scarcely ruffled the sea, or sighed above a whisper in the rigging, had given an air of profound repose to the scene. When I first stepped on deck the whole horizon was buried in this partial obscurity, and the view around, excepting in the vicinity of the Fire-Flies, was lost in misty indistinctness. A few moments, however, had changed the aspect of the whole scene. When I relieved the watch the eastern horizon was shrouded in a veil of dark, thick vapors—for the mists had collected there in denser masses than any where else—while a single star, through a rent in the midst of that weird-like canopy, shone calmly upon the scene; but now the fog had lifted up like a curtain from the seaboard in that quarter, and a long greenish streak of light, stretching along for several points, and against which the dark waves undulated in bold relief, betokened the approach of the moon. Even as Westbrook spoke, the upper edge of her disc slid up above the watery horizon, disappearing and appearing again as the surges rose and fell against it, until gradually the huge globe lifted its whole vast volume above the seaboard, and while the edge of the dark canopy above shone as if lined with pearl, a flood of glorious light, flickering and dancing upon the billows, was poured in a long line of molten silver across the sea toward us, bathing hull and spars, and sails in liquid radiance, and seeming to transmute us in a moment into a fairy land. Such a scene of unrivalled beauty I had never beheld. The contrast betwixt the dark vapors hanging over the moon, and the drizzling brilliancy of her wake below was indeed magnificent. I looked on in mute delight. The few stars above were at once obscured by the brighter glories of the moon. Suddenly, now, as I gazed, a dark speck appeared upon the surface of the moon, and in another instant the tall masts and exquisite tracery of a ship could be seen, in bold relief against her disc, the fine dark lines of the hammer seeming like the thinnest cobwebs crossing a burnished shield of silver. So plainly was the vessel seen that her minutest spars were perceptible as she rose and came slowly on the long heaven.

"Ah! my fine fellow!" said I, "we have you there. Had it not been for your pretty mistress of the night you would have passed us unseen. Make all sail at once—and bear up a few points more so as to get the weather-gauge of the stranger."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"How gallantly the old schooner cuts into the wind," I said, gazing with admiration on our light little craft. I turned to the chase. "Has the stranger altered her course?" I asked, looking for her in the old position, but finding she was no more visible.

"No, sir, I saw her but an instant ago; oh! there she is—that fog bank setting down on the seaboard hid her from sight. You can see her now just to the leeward of the moon, sir."

I looked, and as the man had said, perceived that the dark massy bank of vapours, which had lifted as the moon rose, was once more settling down on the seaboard, obscuring her whole disc at intervals, and shrouding every thing in that quarter in an occasional gloom. For a moment the strange sail had been lost in this obscurity, but as the moon struggled through the clouds, it once more became visible just under the northern luminary. Apparently unconscious of our vicinity the stranger was stealing gently under easy sail, pitching upon the long undulating swell, while, as he lay almost in the very wake of the moon, every part of his hull and rigging was distinctly perceptible. Not a yard, however, appeared to have been moved; not an

additional sail was set. Occasionally we lost sight of him as the moon, wading heavily through the sombre clouds, became momentarily obscured, although even then, from beneath the frownin canopy of vapors above, a silvery radiance would steal out at the edges of the clouds, tipping the masts and sails of the stranger with a soft pearly light that looked like enchantment itself, and which contrasted with the dark hues of the hull and the gloomy deep beneath, produced an effect such as I have never seen surpassed in nature or art.

Meanwhile the wind gradually failed us, until at length it fell a dead calm. All this time the fog was settling down more heavily around us, not gathering in one compact mass however, but lying in patches scattered over the whole expanse of the waters, and presenting a picture such as no one, except he is familiar with a tropical sea, can imagine. In some places the ocean was entirely clear of the fog, while a patch of cold, blue sky above, spangled with innumerable stars, that shone with a brilliancy unknown to colder climes, looked as if cut out of the mists, which on every hand around covered the sky as with a veil. At times a light breeze would spring up ruffling the polished surface of the swell, and, undulating the fog as smoke-wreaths in the nostrils, would open up, for a moment, a sight of some new patch of blue sky above, with its thousand brightly twinkling stars, reminding one of the beautiful skies we used to dream of in our infant's dreams, and then, dying away as suddenly as it arose, the mists would undulate uncertainly an instant, roll to wind each other, and twisting around in a thousand fantastic folds, would finally close up, shrouding the sky once more in gloom, and settling down bodily upon the sombre surface of the deep. At length the moon became wholly obscured. A few stars only could be seen flickering fainter and fainter far up in the fathomless ether, and finally, after momentarily appearing and disappearing, they vanished altogether. A profound gloom hung on all around. The silence of death reigned over our little craft. Even the customary sounds of the swell rippling along our sides, or the breeze sighing through the hamper faded entirely, and save an occasional creaking of the boom, or the sullen filling of a reef-point against the sail, not a sound broke the repose of the scene. The strange sail had long since been lost sight of to starboard. So profound was the darkness that we could scarcely distinguish the look-out at the fore-castle from the quarter-deck. Silent and motionless we lay, shut in by that dark shroud of vapor, as if buried by some potent enchantment in a living tomb.

"Hillo!" said a reefer of my watch to me, "don't you hear something, Mr. Parker?"

I listened attentively, and though my hearing was proverbially sharp, I could distinguish nothing for several moments. At length, however, the little fellow pinched my arm, and inclining my eye to the water, I heard a low moan, not unlike the smothered sobbing of ears that had been muffled. At first I could not credit my senses, but, as I listened again the sound grew more distinctly to my ears, and I grew nearer and nearer.

"Be no mistaking it. Dir—"

"ver, these sounds I have heard a hundred times."

In a few minutes the death-like silence which had preceded the discovery of our unknown visitors returned, and as moment after moment crept by without betraying the slightest token of the vicinity of the assailants, I almost began to doubt my senses, and believe that the sounds I had heard had been imaginary. The most profound obscurity reigned over our

decks. So great was the darkness that I could only distinguish a shadowy group of human beings gathered forward, without being able to discern distinctly any one face or figure; while the only sound I heard, breaking the hush around, was the deep, but half-suppressed breathing of our men. Suddenly, however, when our suspense had become exciting even to nervousness, a low, quick sound was heard right off our starboard quarter, as if one or more boats, with muffled oars, were pulling swiftly on to us; while almost instantaneously a dark mass shot out of the gloom on that side, and before we could realize the rapidity of their approach, the boat had struck our side, and her crew were tumbling in over the bulwarks, cutlass in hand. Our preparation took them, however, by surprise, and for a moment they recoiled, but instantly rallying at their leader's voice, they poured in upon us with redoubled fierceness, cheering as they clambered up our sides, and struggled over the bulwarks.

"Beat them back, Fire-Flies!" I shouted, "give it to them with a will, boys—strike!"

"Press on, my lads, press on—the schooner's our own!" shouted the leader of the assailants.

Leveling my pistol at the advancing speaker, and waving my men on with my sword, I gave him no answer, but fired. The pistol flashed in the air, and in an instant the leader of the foe was upon me, having sprung over the bulwarks as I spoke. He was a tall athletic man, and lifting his sword high above his head, while in his other hand he presented a pistol toward my breast, he dashed upon me. I parried his thrust with my blade, but as he fired I felt a sharp pain in my arm, like the puncture of a pin. I knew that I was wounded, but it only inspired me with fiercer energy. I made a lunge at him, but he met it with a blow of his sword, which shivered my weapon to atoms. Springing upon my gigantic adversary, I wreathed my arms around him, and endeavored to make up for the want of a weapon, by bearing him to the deck in my arms; but my utmost exertions, desperate as they were, scarce sufficed to stagger him, and shortening his blade, he was about plunging it into my

back, when a sudden gust of wind—oh! how deliciously cool in that pent-up hold—eddyed down the hatchway, and lifted the dark chestnut locks of the sufferer, as, with his little head reposing in the lap of an old veteran, he lay in an unquiet slumber. His shirt-collar was unbuttoned, and his childish bosom, as white as that of a girl, was open and exposed. He breathed heavily. The wound of which he was dying, had been intensely painful, but within the last half hour had somewhat lulled, though even now his thin fingers tightly grasped the bed-clothes as if he suffered the greatest agony. Another battle-stained and gray-haired seaman stood beside him, holding a dull lantern in his hand, and gazing sorrowfully down upon the sufferer. The surgeon knelt beside him, with his finger on the boy's pulse. As I approached they all looked up. The veteran who held him shook his head, and would not speak, but the tears gathered too in his eyes. The surgeon

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"Mr. Parker!"

I raised myself up and gazed curiously into his face.

"Little Dick, sir—" he began.

"My God!" I exclaimed, for I had actually forgotten, in the excitement of the combat and the succeeding events, to enquire about my young prisoner, and I now felt a strange presentiment that the mate had come to acquaint me with his death—"what of him. Is any thing the matter?" I asked eagerly.

"I fear, sir," said the messenger, shaking his head sadly, "that he cannot live till morning."

"An! I have been lying here," I exclaimed, reproachfully, "while the poor boy is dying," and I sprang at once from my hammock, hurried on my clothes, saying, "lead me to him at once."

"He is delirious, but in the intervals of lunacy he asks for you, sir," and as the man spoke we stood by the bedside of the dying boy.

The sufferer did not lie in his usual hammock, for it was hung in the very midst of the crew, and the close air around it was really stifling; but he had been carried to a place, nearly under the open hatchway, and laid there in a little open space about four feet square. From the sound of the ripples I judged the schooner was in motion, while the clear calm blue sky, seen through the opening overhead and dotted with myriads of stars, betokened that the fog had broken away. How calmly it smiled down on the wan face of the dying boy. Occasionally a light current of wind—oh! how deliciously cool in that pent-up hold—eddyed down the hatchway, and lifted the dark chestnut locks of the sufferer, as, with his little head reposing in the lap of an old veteran, he lay in an unquiet slumber. His shirt-collar was unbuttoned, and his childish bosom, as white as that of a girl, was open and exposed. He breathed heavily. The wound of which he was dying, had been intensely painful, but within the last half hour had somewhat lulled, though even now his thin fingers tightly grasped the bed-clothes as if he suffered the greatest agony. Another battle-stained and gray-haired seaman stood beside him, holding a dull lantern in his hand, and gazing sorrowfully down upon the sufferer. The surgeon knelt beside him, with his finger on the boy's pulse. As I approached they all looked up. The veteran who held him shook his head, and would not speak, but the tears gathered too in his eyes. The surgeon

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which turned out slight had been properly attended to, and the watch had once more resumed their monotonous tread; while at proper intervals, the solemn cry, "all's well," repeated from look-out to look-out, betokened that we were once more in security, before I sought my hammock. I soon fell a sleep, but throughout the night I was troubled by wild dreams in which Betrice, the ship's boy, and the late strife, were mingled promiscuously. At length I awoke. It was still dark, and the only light near was a single lantern hung at the extremity of the apartment. My fellow messmates around were all buried in sleep. Suddenly the surgeon's mate stood beside me.

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"He is delirious, but in the intervals of lunacy he asks for you, sir," and as the man spoke we stood by the bedside of the dying boy.

The sufferer did not lie in his usual hammock, for it was hung in the very midst of the crew, and the close air around it was really stifling; but he had been carried to a place, nearly under the open hatchway, and laid there in a little open space about four feet square. From the sound of the ripples I judged the schooner was in motion, while the clear calm blue sky, seen through the opening overhead and dotted with myriads of stars, betokened that the fog had broken away. How calmly it smiled down on the wan face of the dying boy. Occasionally a light current of wind—oh! how deliciously cool in that pent-up hold—eddyed down the hatchway, and lifted the dark chestnut locks of the sufferer, as, with his little head reposing in the lap of an old veteran, he lay in an unquiet slumber. His shirt-collar was unbuttoned, and his childish bosom, as white as that of a girl, was open and exposed. He breathed heavily. The wound of which he was dying, had been intensely painful, but within the last half hour had somewhat lulled, though even now his thin fingers tightly grasped the bed-clothes as if he suffered the greatest agony. Another battle-stained and gray-haired seaman stood beside him, holding a dull lantern in his hand, and gazing sorrowfully down upon the sufferer. The surgeon knelt beside him, with his finger on the boy's pulse. As I approached they all looked up. The veteran who held him shook his head, and would not speak, but the tears gathered too in his eyes. The surgeon

first, poor little fellow,—"all's well," repeated from look-out to look-out, betokened that we were once more in security, before I sought my hammock. I soon fell a sleep, but throughout the night I was troubled by wild dreams in which Betrice, the ship's boy, and the late strife, were mingled promiscuously. At length I awoke. It was still dark, and the only light near was a single lantern hung at the extremity of the apartment. My fellow messmates around were all buried in sleep. Suddenly the surgeon's mate stood beside me.

"Mr. Parker!"

I raised myself up and gazed curiously into his face.

"Little Dick, sir—" he began.

"My God!" I exclaimed, for I had actually forgotten, in the excitement of the combat and the succeeding events, to enquire about my young prisoner, and I now felt a strange presentiment that the mate had come to acquaint me with his death—"what of him. Is any thing the matter?" I asked eagerly.

"I fear, sir," said the messenger, shaking his head sadly, "that he cannot live till morning."

"An! I have been lying here," I exclaimed, reproachfully, "while the poor boy is dying," and I sprang at once from my hammock, hurried on my clothes, saying, "lead me to him at once."